

Mason

cutting

From

— THE —

GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION, LTD.

13, FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4.

TELEPHONE

CENTRAL 2684

Cutting from the *Church of England*

Issue dated: 12.2.32 *News*

An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education, Charlotte M. Mason (J. M. Dent, 7s. 6d.), is a reprint of a book first published in 1925. It is the last volume of a series in which Miss Mason expounds the principles and methods of the system of education known as the Parents' National Education Union. No one will seriously question the aim of the book, "a liberal education for all," but there are numbers who will dispute the thesis that this can only be achieved

by the P.N.E.U. No cause, its exponents are compelled to scorn others who are attempting to achieve a conceived purpose by other means. This is one of the defects of the book. Miss Mason has little that is good to say of teachers who do not use her methods. Most oral lessons, for instance, are "talky talky" or "waddle." It is apparent that there is much going on, even in our elementary schools, of which Miss Mason is ignorant, that valuable fruit is being produced by other methods than hers.

Unlike Dr. Yeaxlee, who regards the teacher and the teacher's equipment, as all-important, Miss Mason places almost the whole emphasis upon the pupils, and the pupils are so well-equipped naturally to deal with all that is presented without the interference of a teacher, that we are not surprised that Miss Mason is occasionally guilty of an inferiority complex when she contemplates them. Also, unlike Dr. Yeaxlee, Miss Mason has no sympathy with modern scientific thought, especially in the realm of psychology, and suggests that modern psychological investigation has so far made no contribution to education. She appears to have, therefore, no sympathy with the modern conception of body-mind, and, to the point of weariness, she reiterates an analogy between the feeding of the body and the feeding of the mind in such a way as to compel the conclusion that body and mind are quite separate entities. She definitely says "the educable part of a person is his mind."

Possibly the chief value of the book is its implicit challenge to teachers and educationists whose theory and practice of education have become fixed. The book will be worth the irritation produced in reading it.

House of Education,
Ambleside.

March 12th, 1932.

Dear Sir,

My attention has been drawn to a review in your issue of the 12th February of "An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education" by Charlotte M. Mason. Perhaps I may be allowed to call attention to one or two points which show that your reviewer has perhaps come across the work of the P.N.U. for the first time.

To begin with, ^{this} Charlotte Mason died in 1923 and she left the book in question in manuscript. It was printed by her Trustees after her death. It is a summary of work that has been going on since 1886. She founded her Parents' Union School and her House of Education ^(a Secondary Training College) at Ambleside in 1890 and 1891. At first the work was carried out chiefly in home schoolrooms, but long before she passed away the work had extended to a large number of private Secondary Schools and to Elementary Schools, taken up by teachers who felt that there was something worthwhile for

House of Education,
Ambleside.

their scholars in following her methods.

No one who knew Miss Mason or has carefully read her books could ever accuse her of an attitude of scorn towards teachers for whose devoted work she had an enormous respect.

She did not concern herself ^{in her books methods} with ~~means~~ of education other than those she advocated because she felt she had a definite philosophy of education to offer. The many ^{hundreds} ~~thousands~~ of teachers (apart from her own students) teaching in home schoolrooms, in private Secondary Schools and in Elementary Schools were (and are) constant witnesses to what Miss Mason's philosophy of education and practical methods in the Parents' Union School have done for their scholars.

Again, Miss Mason in one place speaks of science being the message of God to our age, but she distinguishes between pure science and the psuedo science which teaches that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. Her insistence on the feeding of the mind arose from the fact that she considered the mind as a spiritual organism, if one may use the expression, which needs sustenance ^{first} as

House of Education,
Ambleside.

the body needs food. Her insistence on this point of view in season and out of season was due to the fact that so much of modern teaching consists in training the mind, a remnant possibly of the now obsolete training of the faculties which centred the teacher's mind on the use of subjects as gymnastics rather than as supplying the material on which the child could use its natural powers of attention, assimilation and reproduction. We supply the body with food and give it opportunities for exercise, why not also supply the mind with food and make use of its natural powers as we do those of the body?

House of Education,
Ambleside.

Miss Mason's protest against oral lessons followed as a natural consequence. She did not say that oral lessons were never to be given, but she considered that the oral lesson ^{as a teaching method} implied that a child's mind was different from that of an adult. Miss Mason's discovery was that the mind of child and adult did not differ. The child as a person starts life with all the powers he ever will have; all he needs is knowledge and experience; therefore a child must use his own mind upon suitable living books, so that he may get into touch with the mind of the writer. His mind, if healthy and well fed, will perform the acts of assimilation, selection and reproduction, and will grow upon the knowledge so secured just as the adult's mind does. But there are two conditions. The material presented for knowledge must be of great variety; it must be for the most part literary in form and must not be information of the text-book type. The memory acquires information: the mind does not grow except upon knowledge and therefore we feed the child's mind, not that it may know but that it may grow.

Miss Mason had the work of some thousands of children

House of Education,
Ambleside.

from the ages of 6 to 17 passing through her hands year by year, so she could speak with knowledge. The children were of all sorts and conditions and in every part of the world as well as in the British Isles. And those into whose hands she committed her work after her death are able to show that her work still justifies itself.

Faithfully yours,

E. Ritchie

(Director, Parents' Union
School).

M. S. *Kitcher*

From

— THE —

GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION,
LTD.**13, FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4**

TELEPHONE - - - CENTRAL 2684.

Cutting from the *Express**20/1/22***An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education.**
By Charlotte Mason. Dent. 7s. 6d.**The Approach to Religious Education.** By Dr. Basil
Yeaxlee. S.C.M. 2s. 6d.

The educational methods of Miss Charlotte Mason are familiar to the many adherents of the P.N.E.U. They have been tried out in a great variety of schools, with results that are claimed to be revolutionary. In brief, the secret lies in giving children books of good literary quality to read, getting them immediately to reproduce or 'narrate' what they have read, and then testing them again after a longish interval. As a second reading is not allowed, the habit is formed of reading with concentrated attention, and it is believed that this habit is transferred to other pursuits. There can be no doubt that such careful reading is valuable, and that the memory and the power of verbal expression is thus trained along certain specific lines. But, like so many educational reformers, Miss Mason and her disciples exaggerate the importance of the discovery. In education, as in medicine or economics, there is no panacea; yet the votaries of this and other systems follow their particular cults with religious fervour. When one comes to examine the principles of Miss Mason's practice in *An Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education*, one finds a curious farrago of dubious psychology and shrewd practical sense; and the reader is constantly irritated by tedious repetition and by the author's passion for putting the whole world right. Much is superficial; e.g., Marx's 1848 Manifesto is completely demolished in two pages. Continuation Schools are discussed as though the 1918 Act were not a dead letter, and Germans are apparently still the Huns of 1915. Whatever the value of the work done in the schools of the P.N.E.U. may be, it must be assessed by actual results; this *Essay* cannot fail to discredit the system in the eyes of thoughtful and unprejudiced readers.

Dr. Yeaxlee's is a book of a totally different type. It embodies a course of lectures given at Birmingham University to day school and Sunday school teachers; and it will be of real value to such teachers in other places. Dr. Yeaxlee writes simply and lucidly; in such a course he naturally made no attempt at profundity, but he introduced much material from biology and psychology that was probably new to his audience. As a sensible and straightforward approach to this difficult problem the book is to be recommended.

The Parents' Union School,
Ambleside.

January 22nd, 1932.

Dear Sir,

In view of the fact that we have had a good many most understanding reviews of Miss Mason's book, I wonder, will you allow me to call attention to one or two points in which your reviewer seems to have missed Miss Mason's point of view?

It is perfectly true to say that in education, as in medicine or in economics, there is no panacea, but it is not usual for a reviewer to condemn as a curious farrago of dubious psychology a psychology with which he has himself no sympathy, and perhaps not very much understanding.

May I say that your reviewer makes a mistake in thinking that Miss Mason's educational method consists in reading and narration. That is a superficial and popular idea, and this idea of her method is in no sense a discovery. Moreover, reading and narration is, if one may say so, as old as the hills. Miss Mason only made use of it in what we may claim as her discovery, that is, that the mind is as hungry for food as the body, that the food must be good, must be literary, and must be very varied.

To those who know Miss Mason's work, the repetition is not tiresome, because it deals with her method in conjunction with education in many relations, - home schoolrooms, private secondary schools, and elementary schools.

The Parents' Union School,
Ambleside.

It is possible that your reviewer does not know that the "Essay" was published posthumously, and that the Trustees thought it better to issue Miss Mason's work as it stood, as showing the scope of her aims. It is true that the Continuation Schools Act is a dead letter, but various educational authorities are seeking for a means to bring education to the young people for whom Continuation Schools were at first planned, and there is no doubt that in the future provision will be made for the education of young people beyond even the age of Continuation Schools. May I also say that it is not possible to judge a book that is republished in 1931 as if it were a book that is first published in 1931, when the author has been dead for some 8 years.

The last sentence of the review is hardly consistent. We quite agree with the reviewer in saying that the value of the work done in the ^{P. M. U.} schools must be assessed by actual results, but as ^{five volumes of the Home Education} the work done in the schools is founded upon the ^{Denis} "Essay", which ~~is really a summary of Miss Mason's philosophy in theory and practice for the last 40 years, the "Essay" can hardly be said to discredit the system of which it is the origin.~~ ^{historical summary.}

Yours faithfully,

To the Editor of The Listener

(published at Ambleside
from 1886 to
self-fortified this Thomas
Mason's practice)

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M. Kitchen

From

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GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION, LTD.

13 FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4.

TELEPHONE

CENTRAL 2684

Cutting from the *Parents' Review*
9/10/31

Towards a Philosophy of Education

Will you allow me to call attention to one or two points in which your reviewer of Miss Mason's book seems to have missed the author's point of view? It is perfectly true to say that in education, as in medicine or in economics, there is no panacea, but it is not usual for a reviewer to condemn as 'a curious farrago of dubious psychology' a psychology with which he has himself no sympathy, and of which perhaps he has not very much understanding.

May I say that your reviewer makes a mistake in thinking that Miss Mason's educational method consists in reading and narration? That is a superficial and popular idea, and as regards this idea her method is in no sense a discovery. Moreover, reading and narration is, if one may say so, as old as the hills. Miss Mason only made use of it in what we may claim as her discovery, that is, that the mind is as hungry for food as the body, that the food must be good, must be literary, and must be very varied. Again, to those who know Miss Mason's work, the repetition is not tiresome, because it deals with her method in conjunction

with education in many relations—home schoolrooms, private secondary schools, and elementary schools.

It is possible that your reviewer does not know that the *Essay* was published posthumously, and that the trustees thought it better to issue Miss Mason's work as it stood, as showing the scope of her aims. It is true that the Continuation Schools Act is a dead letter, but various educational authorities are seeking for a means to bring education to the young people for whom continuation schools were at first planned, and there is no doubt that in the future provision will be made for the education of young people beyond even the age of continuation schools. May I also say that it is not possible to judge a book that is republished in 1931 as if it were a book that is first published in 1931, when the author has been dead for some eight years?

The last sentence of the review is hardly consistent. We quite agree with the reviewer in saying that the value of the work done in the P.N.E.U. schools must be assessed by actual results, but as the work done in these schools is founded upon the five volumes of the 'Home Education' Series (published at intervals from 1886 to set forth Miss Mason's theory and practice) the *Essay* can hardly be said to discredit a system of which it is the historical summary.

Ambleside

E. RITCHING
Editor, *Parents' Review*

Footnote

From further review of the
new Edition ~~of~~ reprinted
with due acknowledgements to
the editor of the paper noted.

- (9) The Papamoly School Review
(3.1932)
- (10) The Nottingham Guardian
(15.2.1932)
- (11) The Church Times (12.2.1932)
- (12) Liverpool Post (20.1.1932)
- (13) Everyman (28.1.1932)
- (14) Good Times (2.1932)
- (15) Book Reader's Guide
(2.1932)

Poets Are Not Made.

BUT they used to be. In the days before education had been subjected to the modern craze for "Rationalization," many poets used to be manufactured. Before the school curriculum had been purged of any subject which any educational enthusiast or theorist cared to stigmatise as "difficult," the composition of Latin, and even Greek, Verses was recognized as an essential accomplishment of an educated citizen.

Except that it is difficult, and requires considerable mental effort, and is therefore more than can be required of the 20th century pupil, there seems no reason whatever for the practical extinction of the composition of Latin Verse. Even a high Honours degree in Classics can now be obtained without the ability to write Verses, whereas, a generation ago, every aspirant for admission to the lowest forms of a Public School was expected to show some knowledge of this art. This is called Educational Progress.

And yet it may safely be said that there is no subject of study which has so much to recommend it as Latin Verse. A boy writing Verses must think, and think intelligently; he must know his grammar; and he must be accurate. In writing Prose a synonym can usually be substituted for a noun the gender or declension of which has been forgotten; this evasion is not open to the versifier. There is no subject which as quickly as Latin Verse separates the careful from the careless, the trier from the slacker, the boy who knows his subject from the one who doesn't, or even the clever from the stupid.

The greatest benefit of writing Verses is obtained when the pupil is still in the stage of "full-sense" lines. Such lines can usually only be done in one way. The right words must be found, the grammar must be strictly accurate, before the line will "go." A boy who, at the end of an hour, has produced four such lines correctly has done some very real thinking and learnt a considerable vocabulary with much grammar. His neighbour, however, who has spent the whole lesson unable to "get out" one line, merely because he forgot to make the adjective agreeing with *tellus* feminine, has also had a profitable hour; he has learnt two important facts for life; firstly that he must not be stupidly careless, and, secondly, the correct gender of a common Latin noun.

And when later, in the course of progress, the student is promoted to translating English poetry into Latin Elegiacs the benefits of the subject continue. He must have a large Latin vocabulary, he must understand the English, he must think, and think quickly. No doubt many of the lines he produces are not very poetical; many of his epithets are only there because without them the line would be two syllables short; much of his "padding" is rather hard. Virgil and Ovid perhaps would be unkind enough to say that they did not know the composition was intended to be Poetry. But what of that? The finished composition represents to its composer a genuine effort, much real thought, a considerable acquisition of knowledge. The Verses may not be magnificent but they are at least work.

But probably the pupil, who has been so kindly relieved of the necessity of making the effort required

to do Latin Verses by the intervention of the Educational Theorist, is not so grateful as he, no doubt, should be. Being no longer called upon to put forth mental effort in the composition of Elegiacs or Hexameters boys, and, for the matter of that, older people too, are compelled to find opportunity for mental exercise elsewhere. The desire to solve a problem, to fit in the missing pieces to a puzzle, which used to be satisfied by composing Latin and Greek Verse, now finds expression in solving Acrostics or Cross-Word puzzles. The universal craze for the latter—every daily paper now as a matter of course includes its cross-word puzzle—is merely the satisfying of the natural desire to solve a problem. The natural craving used to be met by education, before the requiring from pupils of difficult work, or the necessity of thinking, had come to be regarded as cruelty to children.

The restoration of Latin Verse to a place in the school curriculum should be acceptable to the pupils, who would then be tackling problems in school very similar to those they at present enjoy doing in play hours. The restoration, moreover, would be of immense value for increasing the Classical knowledge, the general accuracy and the mental agility of future generations.

So long, however, as the hopeless process of trying to eliminate every fence and every stony place from the Road to Knowledge continues, so long, unfortunately, it will still be true that Poets are not made.

M. M. S.

Educational Renaissance.

An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education.

By CHARLOTTE M. MASON.

(J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.) Reprinted 1931. 7s. 6d.

The Triumph of the Dalton Plan.

By C. W. KIMMINS, M.A., D.Sc., and BELLA RENNIE.

(J. W. Nicholson & Watson Ltd.) 6s.

This book
Both these books aim at greater freedom for the child, a wider curriculum and the abolition of the dangers of class-room tyranny and the personality of the master dwarfing his boys and cramping their ideas. Don't you know the feeling, when you go into class to face a crowd of eager, expectant faces, to feed minds eager for knowledge—don't you know sometimes the feeling of complete inadequacy to cope with such wonders? Don't you on occasions feel how ill-equipped you are to throw light on all their eager questionings and keep their mental appetite stimulated? Then there are the dangers of the system of putting boys on reports, driving them to their work; dull text-books; vain repetitions of the same work leading to a complete lack of desire for knowledge; the smugness often apparent in the clever boy, a mere armour of defence against the patronizing attitude of the hearty athletes; the cramming necessary for many boys before examinations; the boring talk of dull masters and the duller talk of the master parading himself before his form; the falseness of marks, stars and stripes, prizes and too eager competition; the lack of scope in the curriculum at many schools and the lack of opportunity for boys to do things, make things, say things, and develop their own individuality.

Answers to many of these difficulties seem to be found in the late Miss Mason's book describing the methods of the Parents' National Education Union as developed by herself after a lifetime of study on the subject.

Children are born *persons* with the appetite for knowledge, just as they have the appetite for food. But we so often, in our ignorance, kill that appetite and give them a kind of mental indigestion, as a result of the meagre fare we provide, from which many never recover. And so the sales of the Sunday newspapers go up and the well-bound volume of Shakespeare remains on the shelf. We bore boys with our stupidity and the constant "going over" of the same work, trying to "get them on" quickly for some approaching examination, cramming them in their weak subjects. Education, like growth, is a slow and gradual process, but we keep looking for results. We do not pull the food from children's mouths to see if they are digesting it, but that is what we do with the food we offer for their minds.

All the best in literature should be within the reach of children, not dull text-books and poor abridgements. They should read things once and repeat them: then they will know what they have read. A teacher's powers of self-expression, style of writing and power of thought are often poor, but the best of the world's writings, thought and culture is to be found in books.

And so Miss Mason sees in the faults of our present Educational system the birth of strikes, blind following of poor leadership because men will not think for themselves, over-athleticism, lack of culture, the golf bore, the unsporting soccer crowds and many such things. Perhaps she claims too much, and yet her whole outlook is very sound and her sincerity cannot but impress the reader.

With her claims for the freedom of the child from influences of fear and love, for her plea for a far wider curriculum and a better understanding of our literature, and for a better understanding of art and music I am in entire agreement, and I think that everyone who is trying to find better methods of teaching and attempting to understand the Educational needs of the day should read this book, for they will get much help and food for thought from it.

"The Triumph of the Dalton Plan" seems to aim at similar ideals. There are in the book many testimonials in favour of the method from boys themselves who have changed from the normal class-room methods to the Dalton scheme, the liking for the Dalton methods being unanimous. This may, at first, seem a curious way of advocating a system, but the Dalton plan claims that "a boy's assumption of a definite responsibility for the manner in which he learns, instead of being a more or less passive recipient of instruction from his teacher, is of great value in the development of a vigorous personality," and, that being the case, it is of importance that the opinion of the boys should be consulted. I would say that under a really capable headmaster and staff who had faith in the Dalton plan, the system would produce a boy better equipped for manhood than the normal class-room methods, but that it can easily, under poor direction, fail completely. But surely the idea that "all education must be grounded on the learner's own observation at first hand—on his own personal experience" is very sound, and all Educational reform should be based on more active performance and work

by the boy and less obvious teaching by the master. The boy is content to sit back and listen, but sooner or later all interest in his own education goes and he has to be driven.

Both the systems here dealt with need a considerable outlay on books, and the latter system in its entirety makes big demands on space and requires well-equipped laboratories for the various subjects; but these difficulties can doubtless be overcome by anyone with sufficient faith in the systems. Both books are valuable additions to Educational literature, and I see in them something of the spirit which seems so needed in our Public Schools to-day.

J. P. N.

The Meaning of Degrees and Diplomas in Music.

By H. A. MACLEAN, M.A., A.R.C.O., M.L.S.M.

IT is seldom that a Headmaster really understands the meaning of degrees and diplomas in music and the purpose they serve. When he wishes to engage a classical or mathematical teacher, he will at once know how to select the "specialist" for the required subject, but in the case of music it is often otherwise.

With regard to University Degrees in Music, these are well known as Doctor of Music or Bachelor of Music ("Mus. Doc." or "Mus. Bac.").

The Mus. Doc. degree is the highest distinction in the theory of music and composition, but this does not imply any recognised or competent qualification as a teacher of, or as a performer on, any instrument; or as a teacher of, or as a performer in, singing. Nevertheless, there are many Doctors of Music who are good all-round musicians in addition to being theoretical experts.

The Mus. Bac. degree is one requiring high attainments as a theorist, and, though not of such high standing as that of "Mus. Doc.," is on similar lines as regards the kind of knowledge required.

It should be noted that with the exception of Cambridge, where full-time residence is required (as in the case of taking an Arts degree), musical degrees at other Universities are open to candidates without residence provided that they first pass an examination in general subjects of education.

It is most advisable that holders of University Musical Degrees should take a diploma in some practical subject as a teacher or performer.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS. F.R.C.O. Diploma.

This is the leading qualification as an Organist, but in order to qualify as a Choirmaster and Singing Teacher an additional Diploma known as C.H.M. (Choir-Master) should be taken. The examination for F.R.C.O. includes theoretical knowledge similar as regards the type of subjects to those required for the degree of Mus. Bac.

ASSOCIATESHIP OF THE R.C.O. A.R.C.O. Diploma.

This is a preliminary examination to that for "Fellowship" and means that the holder is a qualified organist and choirmaster with a considerable knowledge of theory. The examination for the F.R.C.O. is of a decidedly higher standard.

219p4CMC421

The work of Miss Charlotte M. Mason, of Ambleside, ~~twenty years ago~~ which led to the establishment of the P.N.E.U. ~~and to~~ many other revolutionary changes in matters educational, has been widely recognised among educationists. Its results may be discerned in many departments of our present-day system of education. To her is owed a great debt of gratitude, because to her writings may be in large measure attributed the change in outlook of most adults towards children, a change which has had most beneficial effects for the world at large. It may be that her teachings have yet to attain their full measure of achievement; education at present in this country is a somewhat muddled affair, but the future is full of interest and hope in the development of the axioms set forth with so much truth, sympathy and persuasiveness in Miss Mason's books.

THE SCIENCE OF RELATIONS.

Her "Essay Towards a Philosophy of Education," of which a new edition now appears, was first published in 1925. In it she first summarises and then explains her beliefs and her experiences in regard to the quest for a liberal education for all children. Her primary axiom, enunciated in the days before the war, when educational principles were very different from the conception of education which she championed, was: Children are born *persons*. The child's individuality was recognised—if not for the first time, yet the thought was first thus incisively expressed by Miss Mason as part of an educational creed. She believed that children are not born either good or bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil. There must be respect on the part of adults for the personality of children, which respect limits the adult to three educational instruments: the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit, and the presentation of living ideas.

"Education is the science of relations" is another of Miss Mason's axioms or definitions. She means that a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts; so he must be trained on physical exercises, nature lore, handicrafts, science and art, and upon many living books. So in devising a syllabus for a normal child of any social status she laid down the necessity of considering three points: the child requires much knowledge, for the mind needs sufficient food as much as does the body; the knowledge should be various, for sameness in mental diet does not create appetite (i.e., curiosity); and knowledge should be communicated in well-chosen language, because his attention responds naturally to what is conveyed in literary form. The expansion of these and other basic principles into a philosophy of education makes of this a fascinating book for teachers, parents and all who are concerned with the problems presented by childhood.

i19p5CMC421

M

Miss Y. K. Chung Return

From

— THE —

**GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION,
LTD.**

13, FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4.

TELEPHONE - - - CENTRAL 2684.



Cutting from the

LIVERPOOL POST.

Issue dated

20.1.32

A welcome new edition of Miss Charlotte M. Mason's last and, in some respects, most important work, "An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education" (7s 6d), first published in 1925, has been issued by Dent. →

119p6CMC421

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From

— THE —

**GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION,
LTD.**

13, FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4.

TELEPHONE

CENTRAL 2684

Cutting from the

Issue dated

28/1/32

TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION, by Charlotte M. Mason (Dent, 7s. 6d.), sets forth the ideals and methods of the Parents' National Education Union. Many years ago Miss Mason founded a school at Ambleside, and her ideas have since been accepted all over the world. She believes that children revel in learning, and that the young mind should be fed with many ideas and left to select those that appeal to it. This book shows the practical results of the P.N.E.U. system, and proves that the education it provides can be a joyous adventure.

119p7CMC421

Mrs. Kitching

From

— THE —

**GENERAL PRESS CUTTING ASSOCIATION,
LTD.**

13, FARRINGDON AVENUE, E.C.4.

TELEPHONE - - - - - CENTRAL 2684

Cutting from the *Great Thoughts*

Issue dated *Feb. 1932*

AN ESSAY TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY OF
EDUCATION. By Charlotte M. Mason. (J. M.
Dent & Sons, 7s. 6d.)

Founder of the Parents' National Educa-
tion Union many years ago, Miss Mason has
very definite ideas on the subject of education,
which she published in 1925. The book is
~~now reissued, and~~ is a valuable exposition of
the principles to be adopted in educating a
child both in the Elementary and in the
Secondary School. The fundamental idea in
Miss Mason's teaching is that children are
persons, and are therefore moved by the same
springs of conduct as their elders. In the
nature of things, the unspoken desire of
children is for a wide and very varied curri-
culum. How this should be provided is a
useful part of this book.

Miss Charlotte Mason approaches the problems of education from an entirely different angle. Her concern is with children, and particularly with young children. She believes that young minds have a natural appetite for knowledge, and they need to be fed with ideas, as bodies must be nourished on "food convenient for them." In actual practice this natural appetite is often spoiled, and interest blunted, by the distracting stimulus of marks, competitions for prizes, examinations, and all the hocus-pocus by which children's attention is turned from knowledge to the entirely different business of pleasing parents or teachers, satisfying examiners, and out-distancing their companions.

The other primary fault in our education, in Miss Mason's experience, is that the books we use in schools are not books at all, but text-books and manuals which serve up pre-digested facts in an uninteresting fashion, but never "ideas," which are really what the mind needs and can assimilate. These are explained at unnecessary length by the teacher, and "impressed upon the memory" by repetition. And the result is what we all know it to be. Most people, at whatever age they leave school, to whatever social class they belong, have no interest in, or desire for, knowledge.

The experience of Miss Mason and her fellow-workers in the P.N.E.U. has convinced them that children delight in knowledge if it is presented to them in the form of great literature. Even young children can read and enjoy a good book, and reproduce in their own words what they have read, and will still know what they have read, without "revision," months afterwards. There is no need for the teacher to intrude himself, with his boring explanations, between the mind of the great writer and the mind of the child. His part is to guide and encourage, to offer the right books at the right time, to see that the intellectual diet is wide and varied and, above all, first-class. And he must teach such things as mathematics and, perhaps, grammar, which are the tools the child needs in his search for knowledge.

Miss Mason is a Churchwoman, and she would offer the knowledge of God to a child as early, and as naturally, as other knowledge. She holds very strongly that religious and moral knowledge is not to be conveyed in "lessons," but in the concrete, human, assimilable form of stories, whether history, biography, or parable, presented in literary form.

The chief differences between her and the Danish movement appear in her emphasis on knowledge, while they put more stress on inspiration, and her belief in books, with an exaggerated contempt for the teacher's talk, while they swear by "the living word." The truth seems to be that each side reacts from the other side at its worst. The Danes dislike the books which usually do duty in schools, while Miss Mason believes in books like "King Lear," or Plutarch's "Lives," or "Woodstock." It is obvious that the two conceptions of education are much closer together than they appear at first sight.

Both these books are of more than ordinary interest and value, and will repay thoughtful reading.

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